

**Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success**  
**January 15, 2015**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** The Honorable Ralph S. Northam, William R. Ermatinger, Margaret Schultze, Lisa Specter-Dunaway, Dr. Marissa Levine, John Purnell, Anne-Marie Twohie, The Honorable Rob Krupicka, The Honorable John Miller, Angelica D. Light, Dr. Pianta, Catherine Hancock, Selena Childress-Mayo, Karla Blasquez, Dora G. Wynn, Phyllis Mondak, Barbara Newlin, Aleta Lawson, Veronica Tate

**Welcome and Updates** – Secretary of Education, Anne Holton, and Secretary of Health, Bill Hazel, began the meeting by thanking the group for their work and providing updates on various initiatives of the Children’s Cabinet (which they co-chair) and their respective secretariats.

**Secretary Holton updates:**

- Received grant to expand Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) to thousands of new children in the Commonwealth

**Secretary Hazel updates:**

- Children’s cabinet just received a Casey Family grant to do some strategic planning, which will begin this spring
- Cross-side work/facilitation
- They are working on a number of bills related to the safety of children in VA day care facilities
- Their philosophy is focused on early interventions; to that end Dr. Levine and VA Dept of Health (VDH) thriving infant doing great work to improve health outcomes
- Their agencies are very focused on improving how they share data appropriately to define and track success

**Update from the Virginia Commission on Youth**

The Lt. Governor informed everyone that the [Council received a letter from the Commission on Youth](#) requesting that they look and quality childcare programming and professional development, the request has gone directly to the Access and Quality Subgroup.

**Presentation on Pay for Success Feasibility Grant**

Dr. Levine and Lisa Specter-Dunaway provided the group with an overview of a grant hat VDH and a Pay For Success workgroup of advocates are applying for, and for which they are seeking support from the Council. A [detailed overview of the project](#) was provided in advance to Council members, who voted unanimously to sign a [letter of support](#).

### **Presentation on Preschool Expansion Grant**

Cheryl Strobel, Associate Director of Early Childhood Education at the Virginia Department of Education, gave the group a brief update on PreK Expansion Grant which Virginia successfully competed for. She covered the details in [this overview document](#).

### **Presentation on Early Head Start Expansion Grants**

Aleta Lawson, Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office in the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services, informed the group that in addition to the PreK Expansion Grant, providers in Virginia received more than \$8 million federal funds in December to provide additional Head Start classrooms to more than 500 children. [The particulars are outlined in her document](#).

### **Updates from Workgroups**

The Lt. Governor asked all of the workgroups to come prepared to discuss their work thus far, preliminary recommendations, and a bit about their work for the spring.

### **School Readiness Workgroup:**

*Virginia Preschool Initiative Subgroup (John Purnell)*

- The workgroup began by surveying all members on their ideas, and has since held 3 meetings. Special thanks was given to DOE Staff, Christine Harris and Cheryl Strobel who have presented various information at each meeting to assist the workgroup.
- The workgroup has 5 preliminary recommendations:
  1. Restore funding to DOE budget for VPI site visits and technical assistance
  2. Change how funds are swept away and how nonparticipation is calculate.
  3. Given increased participation in recent years, find ways to increase whole classrooms not just individuals slots
  4. Improve formula by increasing per pupil funding or the percent of in kind a locality must provide
  5. Incentivize mixed delivery systems by better leveraging community partners

*Access to and Quality of Childcare and Preschool Subgroup (Selena Childress Mayo)*

- Thus far the group has heard presentations on VSQI and its new improvements; current regulation of family day homes; access to child care throughout VA; and the recent reauthorization of the CCDBG grants.
- Moving forward the group will be focused on defining quality in addition to making recommendations about improved access and ensuring that all childcare facilities transition students into preschool or kindergarten seamlessly.

### *Early Elementary School Subgroup (Jim Baldwin on behalf of Dr. Staples)*

- The group met once during the fall and outlined 4 specific areas of focus for its scope of work throughout the spring, for which it has 5 meetings planned:
  - Kindergarten readiness
  - Achievement gap and unmet needs in K-3
  - Coordination of services in the community
  - Defining success with specific data and outcomes

### **Health and Well Being Workgroup (Catherine Hancock):**

- The group has met twice since the last Council meeting and during that time decided that its scope would not focus on behavioral or oral health, as other efforts are underway in Virginia to focus on those. The group will consider adopting recommendations from those groups in the future.
- Thus far the group has heard presentations on the importance of prevention efforts in health care; VDH's thriving infants efforts; racial and poverty disparities and their impact on health outcomes.

### **Data and Governance Workgroup (Delegate Krupicka):**

- The group has met a number of times and has been focused on learning about what exists in Virginia now, like VLDS, and what some of the best governance practices are in other states.
- As for governance, the group is looking at realignments and lots of different models in other states, such as Georgia and Maryland. Some of the improved outcomes seen in other states include: integrated child care and educator licensing; better data sharing; conserving funding streams; etc.
- [The Delegate shared a rough outline of some of the groups considerations](#), and emphasized that these are very preliminary ideas and that the group is considering all options at this point.

### **Public Comments**

Public Comments were received from those in the audience wishing to participate. They included:

- Seon Rockwell: Business woman, mother, and volunteers with United Way Women's Leadership Council which was founded in 2008 and has since grown to 1200 members. The Council and their volunteers support our efforts and are working to ensure that all kids are healthy and well educated.
- Akua Kouyate-Tate: Senior Director of Education at Wolftrap, advocated for early learning to include the arts, as performing arts-support all level domains. [Her comments are available online.](#)

